# Louisiana

## NOAA Works to Improve Louisiana's Coastal and Marine Areas

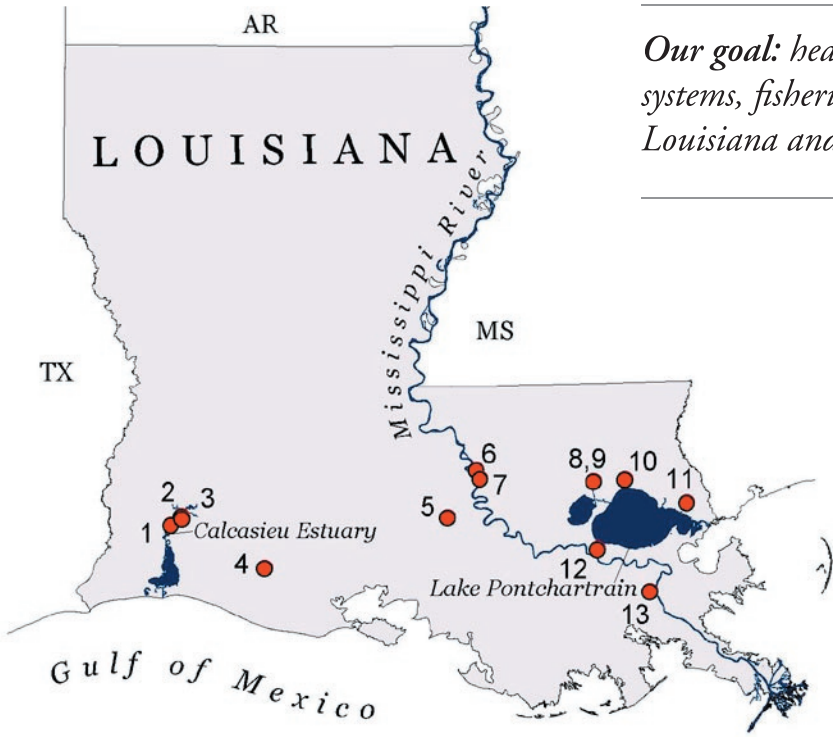
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) acts for the Secretary of Commerce as a federal trustee** under the Superfund Act to protect and restore natural resources in coastal and marine areas. NOAA shares its trust responsibility with Louisiana for resources and supporting habitats such as estuarine intertidal marshes, bays, and estuaries that constitute and support the state's vast fisheries.

Economically and ecologically the most important fishery species are shrimp, oysters, blue crab, and Gulf menhaden. Second only to Alaskan walleye pollock, Gulf menhaden comprises the next highest tonnage single species fishery in the 50 states. White and brown shrimp make up 80% of the value of the Louisiana's commercial catch, roughly $250 million of the $310 million shellfishery (NMFS 2000), the highest in the Gulf of Mexico. The incredible abundance of these animals supports large populations of speckled trout, redfish, black drum, Atlantic croaker, flounder, mackerel, and dozens of other species that are targets for commercial and sport fishermen. Because of their declining abundance, the federally threatened and endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtles and Gulf sturgeon are of special concern in Louisiana.

NOAA's stewardship also safeguards our nation's waterways and coastal activities, ranging from safe navigation and marine transportation to recreational activities along navigable waters.

## *Protecting and Restoring Coastal and Marine Resources*

*NOAA's Coastal Protection and Restoration Division (CPRD) protects and restores natural resources in marine and coastal environments that are affected by hazardous waste sites. NOAA Coastal Resource Coordinators (CRCs) work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of Louisiana, and other trustee agencies to identify risks to natural resources, recommend site cleanups that protect habitat and wildlife, and design projects to restore injured resources and habitats.*




***Our goal:*** *healthy, productive coastal ecosystems, fisheries, and marine mammals in Louisiana and the U.S.*

### Waste Sites

1. Calcasieu Estuary
2. Gulf State Utilities-North Ryan Street
3. PPG Industries Inc.
4. Mallard Bay Landing Bulk Plant
5. Bayou Sorrel Site
6. Petro-Processors of Louisiana, Inc.
7. Devil's Swamp Lake
8. Ponchatoula Battery Company
9. Delatte Metals
10. Madisonville Creosote Works
11. Bayou Bonfouca
12. Bayou Trepagnier (Shell Oil Co/Norco Mfg Complex)
13. New Orleans Naval Air Station

## Cleaning up and Restoring Sites in Louisiana

**The Office of Response and Restoration's Coastal Protection and Restoration Division (OR&R/CPRD) partners with other agencies and responsible parties** to ensure that waste site cleanups not only reduce risk but also restore natural resources and improve the quality of the environment. Coastal Resource Coordinators (CRCs) get involved early in site cleanups to:

- ensure that ecological assessments and the entire cleanup process evaluate and mitigate any risk to sensitive species and habitats;
- incorporate environmental restoration into cleanup actions;
- monitor the successful recovery of trust resources and habitats; and
- reduce the need for expensive re-evaluations.

Because CRCs help make site-cleanup and restoration decisions in coastal regions, everyone saves time and money by avoiding litigation and duplication of effort. Responsible parties benefit from an early resolution of liability for damage to natural resources. Best of all, we can address environmental threats sooner, increasing the chances for effective protection, recovery, and restoration of coastal and marine resources and their habitats.

## Areas of Special Concern in Louisiana

The **Calcasieu River Estuary** is a highly productive habitat that supports many NOAA trust resources but it is severely contaminated. Industrialization of the upper portion of the Calcasieu Estuary began in the 1940s with oil refineries and petrochemical industries predominating over 10 miles of the 37-mile long estuary. Because of this history and accidental spills, the upper Calcasieu Estuary is contaminated with hazardous substances from Moss Lake in the south to the saltwater barrier north of Lake Charles. Portions of Bayous d'Inde, Olsen, and Verdine are severely contaminated, resulting in advisories against fish and shellfish consumption as well as swimming and water sports.

The CRC worked with the EPA and the state of Louisiana to complete ecological and human risk assessments for the Calcasieu Estuary, and participated extensively in design, field implementation, and development of the assessments. NOAA, with EPA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is advising the Calcasieu Estuary Community Action Task Force [the city of Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, the state of Louisiana, industry, and environmental activists] and is providing valuable information to the public at outreach meetings in Lake Charles. NOAA's goal is to comprehensively address contamination in the Calcasieu Estuary and resolve natural resource damage liability through restoration-based settlements. Further NOAA, with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and EPA, is developing innovative approaches to solving contamination problems and restoring ecological functions.

Working in cooperation with EPA and the Calcasieu Estuary task force group, NOAA assembled and continually updates a CPRD watershed project containing a queryable database of contaminant concentrations found in the Calcasieu estuary. The Calcasieu project uses both MARPLOT and ArcView to show the geographic distribution of contaminant and toxicity test data from several EPA Superfund site investigations, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) off-site facility investigations, and other studies. Base maps depict habitat classification, land use, bathymetry, industrial site locations, and other information. Using Query Manager and MARPLOT database and spatial analysis helps NOAA, EPA, and the state of Louisiana to determine areas that may need further investigation and promotes consensus on cleanup and restoration strategies, including early actions that quickly address ecological problems. These mapping products and free software are available to the public at http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/cpr/watershed/watershedtools.html

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